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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000969

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KOMC](#) [LO](#) [LY](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVAKS FORMULATING POSITION ON EXPORT CONTROLS TO LIBYA

REF: STATE 221188

Classified By: CDA Scott Thayer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

1. (C) Per reftel, poloffs met October 15 with Karol Mistrik, Director of the Department of OSCE, Disarmament, and Council of Europe, MFA; Rastislav Krizan, export control expert in the same department; and Lubomir Rehak, European Correspondent, MFA. Mistrik presented the EU argument that a strengthened Code of Conduct would prevent inappropriate exports to Libya. He noted Slovakia did not want to exclude itself from opportunities that other EU states would soon enjoy.

2. (C) Mistrik said lifting the embargo was a positive signal to reward Libya for "its recent strides." He said lifting the embargo does not preclude effective export controls. The EU member states, including Slovakia, would not export high-tech or sensitive technologies to Libya. He described lethal and non-lethal export policy as the matter of internal discussion at the MFA. He said Slovakia cannot stand alone in the EU and does not see why they should not export the same materials other EU states do. Rehak added the Council of Ministers is waiting on a positive sign from Libya on the Bulgarian medics and human rights situation before making further policy decisions.

3. (C) Mistrik defended the EU Code of Conduct, describing export controls as a matter of national policy for responsible governments. He described the "political commitment" as sometimes stronger than legal ones due to effective peer pressure. He said Slovaks are still discussing what, if anything, they might approve in the future for export to Libya. Poloffs informed MFA interlocutors that should the GOS export "lethal" materiel while U.S. sanctions were in place, they jeopardized Slovak FMF and IMET assistance. DCM made the same points October 18 with Lubomir Cano, head of MFA's Security Policy department, and Vladimir Jakabcin, MOD DirGen for International Policy. Mistrik was visibly concerned at the possible impact exports of certain "lethal" materiel might have on FMF, IMET, and future involvement in the Excess Defense Articles program.

4. (SBU) COMMENT: Arms exports were in the past a large component of the Slovak economy. Czechoslovak arms production peaked in 1988 when 140,000 people were employed directly or indirectly by the industry. Seventy percent of production was exported (fifty percent to Warsaw pact countries and twenty percent to developing countries) and thirty percent was for domestic use. Sixty percent of the 100 Czechoslovak arms enterprises were located in Slovakia. The industry collapsed during the 1990s and the GOS would like to revive arms production. DefMin Juraj Liska proposed in September to UnderSecDef for Acquisition Technology and Logistics working with U.S. firms to produce arms required by NATO. There are still stockpiles that the Slovaks would like to market. END COMMENT.
THAYER

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